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The President's Daily Brief

21 July 1972

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Top Secret

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

21 July 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Soviet withdrawal from Egypt will include at least some operational units as well as advisers. *(Page 1)*

South Vietnamese troops have cleared the road from Saigon to An Loc, but to the north, the enemy is attempting to cut Route 1 behind South Vietnamese units attacking in Quang Tri Province. *(Page 3)*

Sirik Matak is reconsidering his earlier rejections of the vice-presidency of Cambodia. *(Page 4)*

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EGYPT-USSR

[redacted] *the Soviet withdrawal from Egypt will include at least some operational units as well as advisers.* 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

(continued)

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According to press reports, some personnel and dependents have already left on civil aircraft.

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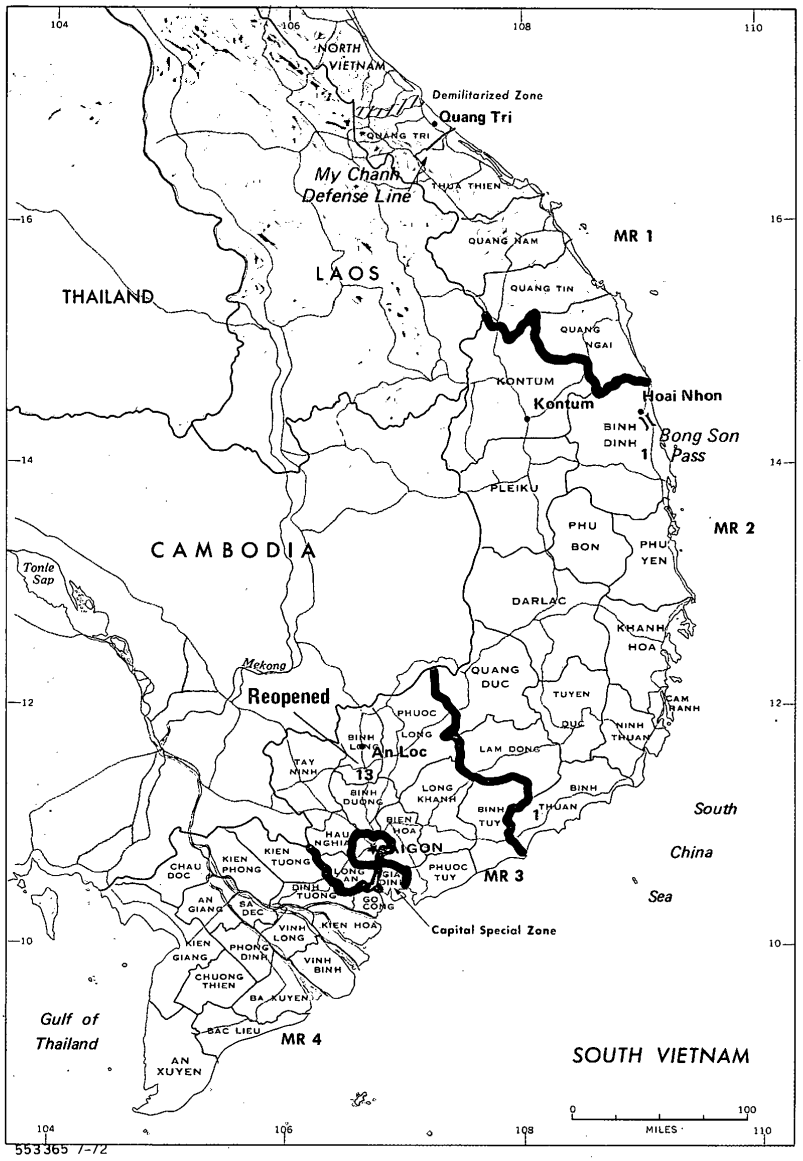

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Elements of Saigon's 25th Division yesterday cleared the last of the Communist blocking forces from Route 13 south of An Loc. The government plans to send a convoy up the road today. Route 13 had been closed since 5 April, and efforts to open it had been repeatedly frustrated by well-entrenched enemy troops.

In coastal Military Region 2, the government counteroffensive into the northern districts of Binh Dinh Province is proceeding against only light enemy resistance. South Vietnamese Army troops and tanks moved through the Bong Son Pass and according to late press reports, reoccupied Hoai Nhon district town without a fight.

Fighting around Quang Tri City is still at a reduced level, although enemy artillery continues active. An enemy battalion is said to have attacked government troops on the My Chanh defense line near Route 1, well south of Quang Tri. This area has seen little combat activity since the South Vietnamese offensive began on 28 June, but recent intercepts have indicated that the Communists intend to attack South Vietnamese forces in Quang Tri from the rear. One message referred to shifting some units closer to Route 1 and to making a "strong assault behind" the advancing government forces. Another noted that in the event of a South Vietnamese retreat, "we have units blocking Route 1."

In the highlands, a South Vietnamese Army unit probing northwest of Kontum City was attacked and suffered losses of more than 100 killed, wounded, and missing. This is the second such attack in this area in three days by an enemy force we believe has the mission of screening the withdrawal of other Communist forces from the Kontum battlefield.

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CAMBODIA

President Lon Nol has again offered Sirik Matak the vice-presidency [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Matak had turned down earlier offers because he believed that the office would be powerless, but this time Lon Nol promised him his unqualified support and said that the vice-president would in effect serve as "president delegate." He even offered Matak the authority to pick a new cabinet and prime minister, but stated that his current offer would be the last he would tender. 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

In view of his first-hand experience as Lon Nol's deputy, Matak probably harbors reservations concerning the worth of Lon Nol's promises to delegate authority. Nonetheless, the vice-presidency would give Matak a significant advantage over potential rivals in a bid for power in the event that Lon Nol dies or is incapacitated by another stroke. [redacted] 25X1
25X1
[redacted] 25X1

The vice-presidential appointment will be made immediately following the National Assembly elections on 3 September. Matak may try to defer a decision as long as he can in order to protect his own power base. Should he accept immediately, he could well undermine the electoral chances of his newly organized Republican Party. He would also hurt his standing among Lon Nol's other opponents.

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